

I am writing this comment to let you know of my opposition to Broadband over Power Lines (BPL) internet access. This technology could very well raise the noise floor on HF to such a level that it would be impossible to conduct effective communications on HF frequencies.

Numerous services could be effected, including shortwave broadcasting, the military, the Coast Guard, assorted government agencies, and Amateur Radio. The local noise floor on HF in the vicinity of BPL could be effected to the point where only the very strongest signals could be heard. While that is a local problem that may or may not be dealt with on a local level, there are international implications as well. The effect of literally tens of thousands of low level white noise generators attached to millions of miles of powerlines could significantly raise the HF (and lower VHF) noise floor outside the boundaries of the United States. This could be detrimental to HF communications in the entire Western Hemisphere. Much like a single snowflake is inaudible when it hits the ground, yet a heavy snowfall produces an audible hiss, widespread use of this technology could make communications at HF and lower VHF frequencies difficult, if not impossible for much of the World.

As a licensed amateur radio operator, I fully expect and plan on using my equipment to assist whenever there is an emergency requiring communications. Amateurs have assisted in many emergencies over the years, some of them requiring the long distance capability of HF. If BPL is implemented in the US, this could sound the death-knell for that capability. After all, if HF is all but unusable, there will eventually be fewer and fewer hams with the capability to assist in a wide area emergency.

I would also like to point out that BPL has been rejected in Japan and in Finland, precisely because the interference to radio communications was unacceptable. Also, amateur radio operators in Austria have documented serious interference problems with the BPL pilot program in that country.

Once again, I am opposed to the implementation of BPL in the United States.